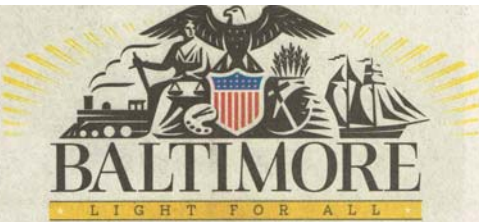


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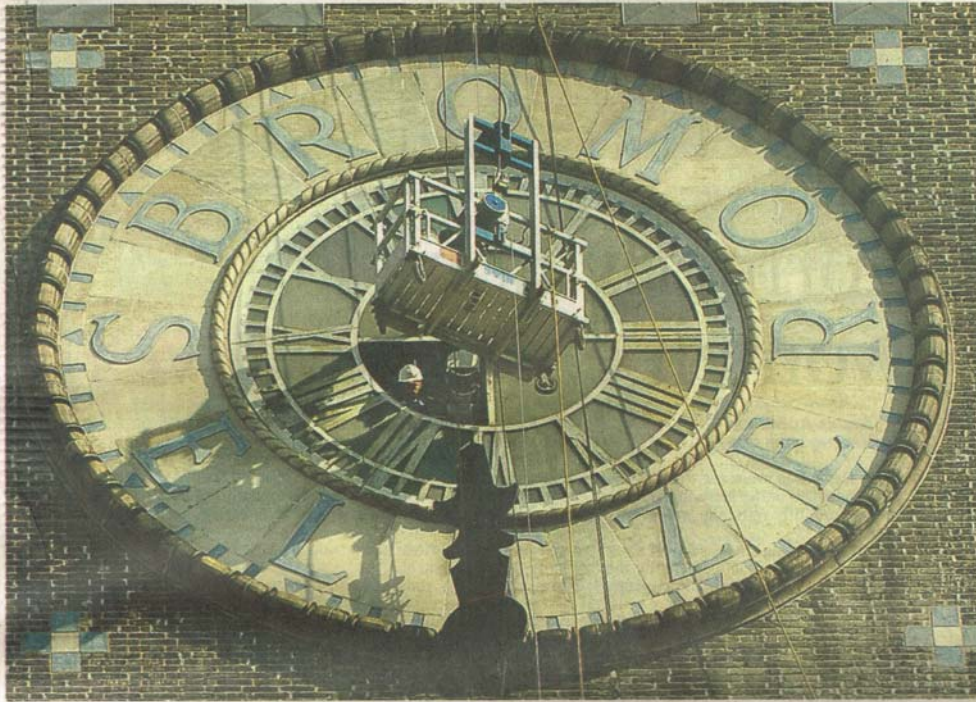
# SUN

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## Hands of time, updated



JED KIRSCHBAUM/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTO

A repair crew works 230 feet above the ground to repair the south face of the Bromo Seltzer Tower clock. The huge hands, which weigh about 200 pounds each, were hoisted into place Tuesday morning. The south face of the clocktower, which succumbed to a combination of rotting wood and a frozen drive shaft, had been stalled since 2007. **ARTICLE, PG 2**



**See the video online**

Watch as a crew makes repairs on the Bromo Seltzer clock at [baltimoresun.com](http://baltimoresun.com)

 **GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
2010 SESSION**

## Md. cuts worry health officials

Long-term drop in services feared with 2011 budget

**By Larry Carson**

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Local health officials from across Maryland say this year's state budget will lock in crippling cuts that will weaken food inspections, pregnancy clinics, chronic disease prevention and other services provided by front-line workers.

"We're very concerned about the viability of local health departments," said Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, president of the Maryland Association of County Health Officers and a Frederick County employee.

The spending plan that lawmakers are poised to adopt this week contains \$37 million in state funds for local health departments — about the same amount they received in 1997. As recently as two years ago, the local departments got \$73 million in state money for their operations. Local governments also contribute to local health departments, which are technically state agencies.

was fined \$4,000 last month by the Department of the Environment, which closed its inquiry.

The Hudsons' lawyer has said the legal costs incurred defending the suit could bankrupt the farm, which has been operating for more than 100 years.

The budget conference committee also erased a check box on the Maryland state income tax forms for people to donate money to a public campaign fund. That fund has not been used in recent memory.

## House and a Senate panel vote for tougher gang law

By Julie Bykowitz

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The House of Delegates approved a measure Tuesday designed to get tough on gangs — over the opposition of black and Hispanic delegates from urban areas who worried it would be overreaching.

Later in the day, a Senate committee voted for another version of the measure. If that passes the full Senate, the two chambers must work out their differences before Monday's end of the legislative session.

Lawmakers and law enforcement officials have worked for months on a way to expand anti-gang legislation enacted about two years ago, after prosecutors complained it was unwieldy and had barely been used.

Both measures moving through the General Assembly would enable judges to give longer prison sentences to gang members convicted of certain crimes.

Sen. Brian E. Frosh, chairman of the Judicial Proceedings Committee and a Montgomery County Democrat, said the Senate plan "dramatically expands" the set of crimes that trigger increased penalties.

It also broadens the definition of "gang activity" that prosecutors can use to prove gang membership, Frosh said.

The House rewrote its bill after listening to some concerns of civil liberties groups and public defenders, who remain opposed to it, bill supporters said. For example, the statute would be used only if someone "knowingly" participates in a gang-related crime.

Still, Del. Ana Sol Gutierrez, a Montgomery County Democrat, warned that the anti-gang measure is "bad public policy" because it is "criminalizing kids."

Del. Aisha N. Braveboy, a Prince George's County Democrat, said the bill "brings in people who may or may not be associated with a crime."

The bill's sponsor, Del. Gerron S. Levi, a Prince George's Democrat, called those concerns baseless.

"It does not punish 'association,'" Levi said. She argued that the new statute would limit the extended sentences to someone who is convicted of a crime, a proven gang member, and either has killed someone or committed two gang-related offenses.

Baltimore State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy said prosecutors made "great progress" this year on legislation that has failed in the past few years. She had not seen the Senate version but said the House plan is "not everything we wanted, but pretty good."

# Bromo clock repair brings relief

By Mary Carole McCauley

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The hands of time really did stand still Tuesday at approximately 10:35 a.m.

But that wasn't until after they twisted and clanged in the wind for more than an hour as workers hoisted two huge metal clock hands up the south face of the Bromo Seltzer Tower on an elaborate pulley system.

The four-sided clock soaring nearly 288 feet was built in 1911 and is an indelible part of the Baltimore landscape. Films set in Charm City often include a shot of the brown brick tower that resembles a medieval fortress. The embedded chronometer spells out "Bromo Seltzer" where the numbers usually go — the "B" is in the 10 o'clock position — and has faces that are 24 feet in diameter, or one foot larger than those adorning London's Big Ben.

But for the past three years, just the north, west and east faces have kept the proper time. The south face, which succumbed to a combination of rotting wood and a gunked-up drive shaft, had been stalled since 2007.

Azola & Associates, a local firm specializing in historic renovations, tried to unstuck the hands in September 2007.

"It ran for 15 minutes, and then it stopped," said Tony Azola, the company's vice president. "Nobody knew what was wrong with it."

Clearly, more than a patch job was needed, and on March 16, his crew returned to the tower to disassemble the timepiece, diagnose and fix the problem, and put it back in working order. This is the first major repair since the clock stopped running for three months in 1997, when the fix was made while the hands remained firmly attached to the face.

And so, on a gorgeous spring morning, Azola and Charles Whiddon, the project superintendent, stood on an outdoor balcony 15 stories up and struggled to secure first the hour hand and then the minute hand with cables. One story above, Leif Cogswell rode in an open metal basket that swung precipitously in the breeze, about 230 feet above the exceedingly hard ground.

Cogswell, a window washer, played down the danger, saying the basket "is more substantial than the ones I usually work in." He added cheerfully: "It's pretty breezy out here. For some reason, the platform wants to spin."

The clock hands are large and heavy. The hour hand is 9 feet tall and the minute hand 13 feet. Each of the wooden fingers weighs about 200 pounds.

The enterprise brings to mind the iconic image of silent film star Harold Lloyd dangling from a skyscraper clock far above a busy Los Angeles street in "Safety Last" from 1923. As Lloyd kicks in the air, the face slowly pulls loose from its moorings — a scenario that Azola & Associates was determined to avoid.



JED KIRSCHBAUM/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTO

Project superintendent Charles Whiddon, left, and Ed Balvert position the 9-foot hour hand for lifting to the south face of the Bromo Seltzer Tower in Baltimore.

"We didn't know how heavy the hands were until we took them down on March 16," Azola said. "We lost a little bit of sleep trying to figure it all out."

In addition to ensuring the safety of his crew, Azola also worried that one of those sharply pointed hands might work loose from its cables and plunge toward the ground, endangering onlookers and giving a new meaning to the term "expiring minutes."

So he and his crew spent weeks analyzing everything that could possibly go wrong, down to calculating the amount of slack in the ropes and cables.

"We didn't want to bungee-jump the hands down," said Whiddon, the project superintendent.

The weeks of preparation paid off. The hour hand was tightened into place at 10:15 a.m., and the more cumbersome minute hand was attached 25 minutes later.

Cogswell planned to spend the rest of the day literally up in the air, balancing the weights, touching up a few spots of faded paint and washing the windows.

Then, Joe Wall, the Bromo Tower's facilities manager, expected to synchronize the south face with the other three. Before today's rush hour, the south face was scheduled to resume ticking, and Baltimore could once again claim bragging rights as home of the world's largest, four-faced gravity-driven clock.

So great was Azola's relief that he permitted himself a small pun.

"It all went off like clockwork," he said.